Yeager wins Presidential Early Career Award

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Award honors leading early-career scientists and engineers

LOS ALAMOS, N.M., Jan. 31, 2017—John Yeager, of Los Alamos National Laboratory's High Explosives Science and Technology group, is a recipient of the Presidential Early Career Award for Scientists and Engineers. The Presidential Early Career Awards are intended to encourage and accelerate American innovation to grow our economy and tackle our greatest challenges.

"I congratulate these outstanding scientists and engineers on their impactful work," said former President Obama, who gave the award while still in office. "These innovators are working to help keep the United States on the cutting edge, showing that federal investments in science lead to advancements that expand our knowledge of the world around us and contribute to our economy."

The Presidential Early Career Award is the highest honor bestowed by the U.S. government on outstanding scientists and engineers in the early stages of their independent research careers.

“John is an innovative early-career scientist, exemplifying a generation of scientists applying world-class cutting-edge science to pressing national-security missions,” said Eric Brown, Los Alamos’ Explosive Science and Shock Physics division leader. “He leads an exciting research program employing in situ probes to understand how the meso-structure of explosives affects their performance and safety.”

Brown said this work employs unique user facility capabilities, such as the Los Alamos Neutron Science Center, to address pressing national-security needs. It is an example of science on the roadmap to MaRIE, the Laboratory’s proposed experimental facility to combine x-ray and neutron-scattering methods for unprecedented, time-resolved access to structural properties of materials from atomic- to meso-scales.

Yeager is among 102 scientists and engineers from 12 government agencies who received this year’s awards. See the full list of winners here.

About Yeager

Yeager earned his bachelor’s, master’s and doctoral degrees from Washington State University. He began working at Los Alamos during his Ph.D. study in 2009 and continued his research at the Laboratory as an Agnew National Security Postdoctoral Fellow; he has been a technical staff member since 2013.

Throughout his career, Yeager has studied a variety of materials-science problems, ranging from glass formation and corrosion to fuel-cell production to plastic-bonded-explosive performance. His research at the Laboratory has focused on microstructure characterization and mechanical properties of plastic-bonded explosives and other energetic materials.

About the awards

The awards, established by President Clinton in 1996, are coordinated by the Office of Science and Technology Policy within the Executive Office of the President. Awardees are selected for their pursuit of innovative research at the frontiers of science and technology and their commitment to community service as demonstrated through scientific leadership, public education or community outreach.

This year’s recipients are employed or funded by the following departments and agencies: Department of Agriculture, Department of Commerce, Department of Defense, Department of Education, Department of Energy, Department of Health and Human Services, Department of the Interior, Department of Veterans Affairs, Environmental Protection Agency, National Aeronautics and Space Administration, National Science Foundation, Smithsonian Institution and the Intelligence Community. These departments and agencies join together annually to nominate the most meritorious scientists and engineers whose early accomplishments show the greatest promise for assuring America’s preeminence in science and engineering and contributing to the awarding agencies' missions.